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## Keeping up with “The China Beat”—5 Recent Developments

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# Keeping up with “The China Beat”—5 Recent Developments

June 13, 2008 in [Frivolous Friday](#), [The Five-List Plan](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [No comments](#)

*This is just a little list, for the “Frivolous Friday” feature, made up of tidbits about the site. It may have curiosity value for longtime readers, and it may serve to provide an overview of the blog to those who have just started tuning in.*

1) Thanks to an off-hand remark by Don Sutton, whose insights on [mourning practices](#) appeared on this site yesterday, contributors to the blog now have an official name: China Beatniks. This has a nice ring to it and, according to Wikipedia at least, it has a special meaning for a blog that has been paying special attention, via Ken Pomeranz’s postings, to things that happened in [years ending in 8](#): it was coined [50 years ago in 1958](#).

2) We’ve been footnoted for what I think is the first time (though if anyone finds an earlier citation, please post a comment). The footnote I have in mind comes in Geremie Barmé’s [latest article](#), a wide-ranging look at “Olympic Art & Artifice,” which appears in the July-August issue of *The American Interest* and is well worth reading, containing more than its fair share of the clever turns of phrase and deft moves to bring past and present together in meaningful ways that we’ve come to expect from its author. When mentioning the response to the torch relay, he points readers to his [guest post on this site](#).

3) This veers from the “Frivolous Friday” theme toward the “Self-Promotion Saturday” one (so you might want to wait a day to read what follows), but it still seems worth mentioning that we’ve begun to regularly hit or top the 500 readers-a-day mark. As we’ve been “live” for just about 5 months, this suggests a growth rate of about 100 readers a month. Another number to note is that May was the first month we’ve been in operation when we had more postings (32) than there were days (31).

4) This month, we’ve gotten what I think are our first comments in the response section from journalists (though we’ve had posts before, of course, that were either by or based on interviews with reporters), a couple of whom responded to Pierre Fuller’s piece on [clichés in coverage of China](#). And one of these came from a journalist, Richard Spencer of the *Daily Telegraph*, [whose own blog](#) many of those writing for “China Beat” read. This, to switch into academese for a moment, nicely reveals the “intertextual” and “dialogic” nature of the blogosphere—and also the international nature of it (as Pierre was writing from Irvine, California, while Richard runs his blog in Beijing and another journalist weighing in with a comment, Iain E. Marlow, is based in London). We’ve had one comment recently as well from someone (Adam Teslik), who has an interesting blog called [“China Government Watch”](#) that I hadn’t paid attention to until he posted his remarks, but now will check in on periodically.

5) If May was noteworthy for an increase in the sheer number of posts, June is shaping up as notable for an expansion of disciplines and types of writers heard from. When it comes to academics, we’re moving beyond the tendency for historians and [anthropologists](#) to dominate, though historians do still account for most of the posts from within the academy. We’ve gone philosophical lately, for example, with guest pieces earlier this week by two scholars from that field, Daniel A. Bell and Daniel Little. And via the latter’s piece on Charles Tilly, sociology has been brought into the mix for a second time—the first being through sociologist James Farrer’s [May posting](#) on coverage of China in Japan. (Political science has also been represented in the past, in the form of a February interview that “China Beat” reporter [Angilee Shah did with scholar in that field Benjamin Read](#), as has comparative literature in the form of [David Porter’s posts](#).)

Looking beyond the academy, we’ve run things in the past by official “Beatniks” and guest contributors with a background in free-lance writing ([Leslie T. Chang](#), [Peter Hessler](#), [Caroline Finlay](#)) and by one British journalist-turned-novelist ([Catherine Sampson](#)). But June has seen our first posting by a writer of fiction originally from China ([Xujun Eberlein](#)) and our first interview with the author of a memoir about growing up in in the PRC ([Lijia Zhang](#)). And, as a final comment and yet another sign of the lack of importance of geographical boundaries where cyberspace is concerned (aside that is from issues of censorship), we were delighted to see a Shanghai-based site called [“The China Herald”](#) point

its readers to Irvine-based Nicole Barnes' "China Beat" interview with Beijing-based Lijia Zhang when encouraging its readers to attend a talk the author was about to give in its city.